64TH CONGRESS, 1st Session. | HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. | DOCUMENT No. 536.

14-B

MONHEGAN HARBOR, ME.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORT ON PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF MONHEGAN HARBOR, ME.

JANUARY 10, 1916.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered to be printed, with illustration.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 8, 1916.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, dated 7th instant, together with copy of a report from Maj. F. A. Pope, Corps of Engineers, dated October 12, 1915, with map, on preliminary examination of Monhegan Harbor, Me., made by him in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915.

Very respectfully,

LINDLEY M. GARRISON,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
Washington, January 7, 1916.

From: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army.
To: The Secretary of War.
Subject: Preliminary examination of Monhegan Harbor, Me.

1. There is submitted herewith for transmission to Congress report dated October 12, 1915, with map, by Maj. F. A. Pope, Corps of Engineers, on preliminary examination authorized by the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915, of Monhegan Harbor, Me.

2. Monhegan Island lies about 8 miles off the general coast line of the State of Maine, about 22 miles east of the mouth of Kennebec River, and about 18 miles southwest from the mouth of Penobscot Bay. Monhegan Harbor lies between Monhegan Island and Manana Island and is the only anchorage at the locality. It is about 2,000 feet long and from 500 to 900 feet wide, and its depth ranges from 6 feet at mean low tide at the inner end to about 90 feet at the entrance. The harbor widens out at the entrance and is exposed to wind and sea from the southwest, and the seas funnel into it in such a way as to make conditions bad when the wind is from that direction. The improvement desired is stated to be the construction of a breakwater which will protect the harbor from southerly and westerly gales. The district officer states that owing to the great depth at the mouth of the harbor such an improvement would be very expensive, and if the breakwater were placed farther up in the harbor, where both length and depth would be less, it would so restrict the protected area as to be of doubtful value. The community at Monhegan is quite small and the commerce correspondingly limited, with little prospect of material increase. The district officer does not believe that a harbor of refuge at this place would be utilized by general navigation, and he expresses the opinion, in which the division engineer concurs, that the locality is not worthy of improvement by the General Government.

3. This report has been referred, as required by law, to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and attention is invited to its report herewith, dated November 23, 1915, concurring in the views of the district officer and the division engineer.

4. After due consideration of the above-mentioned reports, I concur in the views of the district officer, the division engineer, and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and therefore report that the improvement by the United States of Monhegan Harbor, Me., is not deemed advisable at the present time.

DAN C. KINGMAN,
Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS.

[Third indorsement.]

BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS,
November 23, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. The following is in review of the district officer's report authorized by the river and harbor act of March 4, 1915, on preliminary examination of "Monhegan Harbor, Maine."

2. Monhegan Harbor is on the southwesterly side of the island of Monhegan, which lies about 8 miles off the general coast line of the State of Maine and about 22 miles east of the mouth of the Kennebec River. The harbor lies between Monhegan Island and a small island called Manana Island, about 650 feet distant. The harbor is nearly closed at its upper end, but is open at the south end, the available

width being from 500 to 900 feet and the depth from 18 to 90 feet. The mean range of tide is 9.1 feet. The harbor is open to the southwest, from which direction the prevailing summer winds come and at times storms which cause trouble in the harbor.

3. The permanent population of the island is about 130 and the summer population about 630. The principal occupations are supplying the wants of the summer visitors and fishing. The amount of commerce is not given. The improvement desired is the construction of a breakwater which will protect the harbor from southerly and westerly gales. The cost would be large, and the district officer is of opinion, in which the division engineer concurs, that Monhegan Harbor is not at this time worthy of improvement by the General Government.

4. Interested parties were informed of the unfavorable report of the district officer and given an opportunity of submitting statements and arguments to the board, but no communications on the subject have been received.

5. The community at Monhegan is quite small and the amount of commerce correspondingly so, with little prospect of any material increase. The physical conditions are such that a breakwater which would be of value in protecting the harbor and at the same time not unduly reduce the anchorage area would represent a cost far in excess of the probable resulting benefits. The board, therefore, concurs with the district officer and the division engineer in the opinion that it is not advisable for the United States to undertake the improvement of Monhegan Harbor, Me.

6. In compliance with law, the board reports that there are no questions of terminal facilities, water power, or other related subjects which could be coordinated with the suggested improvement in such manner as to render the work advisable in the interests of commerce and navigation.

For the board.

JOHN BIDDLE,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
. Senior Member Present.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF MONHEGAN HARBOR, ME.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
Portland, Me., October 12, 1915.

From: District Engineer Officer.
To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army
(Through the Division Engineer).
Subject: Preliminary examination of Monhegan Harbor, Me.

1. The river and harbor act of March 4, 1915, directs a preliminary examination of Monhegan Harbor, Me.

2. Monhegan Harbor is the only anchorage at Monhegan Island which affords any shelter. Monhegan Island lies about 8 miles off the general coast line of the State of Maine, about 22 miles east of the mouth of the Kennebec River, and about 18 miles southwest from the mouth of Penobscot Bay, The locality is shown on Coast Survey chart No. 105 and on the map which accompanies this report.

The island is about one and three-quarter miles in length and about three-fourths of a mile in width. Its greatest dimension is northeast and southwest. A little to the south of the center of the west shore and about 650 feet distant is a small island called Manana Island. The space between the islands is closed at its upper end by ledges, except for two passages, one about 100 feet wide and 12 feet or more deep at mean low tide; the other about 50 feet wide and 6 feet or more deep at mean low tide. This space or opening, which widens at its lower or southwesterly end, is called the harbor. It is about 2,000 feet long and from 500 to 900 feet wide between 6-foot contours, and has a depth ranging from 6 feet at mean low tide at the inner end to about 90 feet at the entrance. The mean range of tide is 9.1 feet. Mud and sand have collected in this space so that fair anchorage is afforded. The opening, widening as it does to the southwest, is exposed to wind and sea from that direction, and the seas funnel into it in such a way as to make conditions bad when the wind is from that direction, and it may be added that during the summer season the prevailing winds are from the southwest. During cyclonic disturbances when southeasterly storms develop and the wind changes to south and thence to southwest and west, conditions are particularly bad. The island is surrounded by numerous ledges and the shores of the island itself are abrupt and rocky. A little farther from the island in all directions the depths are great.

3. Under the provisions of the river and harbor act of August 11, 1888, a preliminary examination was made of this locality in that year. The report was printed at page 547, Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1889. It was unfavorable. At that time it was stated that the population of the island was about 133, that the business consisted in fishing, carried on by a fleet of 50 or 60 small boats from 17 to 22 feet in length, with an average value of about $25. It was contended that the boats got adrift and were wrecked or lost from lack of protection. A small sailboat carried mail to the island twice per week during the summer. Small steamers ran to the island during the summer, and a small schooner about once in two weeks to collect fish which had been caught and salted. The construction of a breakwater was considered as involving an expense far in excess of any profitable benefit.

4. I made a personal visit to the island on August 26, 1915, and saw a number of persons interested in the proposed improvement. The statement was made to me that the permanent population is now about 130, and that during the summer it is augmented by about 500 persons. Excursion parties considerably increase this number at times. During the summer a steamer which carries mail goes from Thomaston to Monhegan and thence to Boothbay Harbor and return daily, except Sundays, thus giving 12 mails to and from the island per week. Another steamer makes two round trips per day from Boothbay Harbor to Monhegan during the summer season. During the period October–May three round trips per week are made by a steamer plying from Port Clyde to Monhegan, and thence to Boothbay Harbor, and return, giving three mails per week. The influx of so many summer visitors makes occupation for a large number of the permanent population and affords considerable income. After the departure of the summer visitors, during the remainder of the year the principal industry is lobster fishing. No statistics are available as to

the tonnage or value of freight shipped to or from the island per year or as to the number of passengers carried.

5. Changes have occurred since the time of the former preliminary examination and the small sailing boats are no longer used. Motor boats are now the rule, ranging in length from 21 to 55 feet. There are now at Monhegan 5 large fishing and sailing vessels, 28 motor boats, and about 60 smaller craft. It is said that there are seines in the harbor valued at more than $2,500. This latter item alone is nearly twice as great as the value of the entire fishing fleet at the time of the examination of 1888. A number of valuable summer cottages have been built, and it is claimed that more would be erected if better harbor facilities were provided. Four hotels for the accommodation of summer visitors have also been built. It is one of the characteristics of lobster fishing that the lobsters have to be marketed alive. Consequently they have to be saved in this condition until a vessel arrives to take them away. It is also one of the features of this business that lobsters are held for advantageous markets. They are stored in submerged cars and must be placed in some situation where they will not be liable to be lost during storms.

6. What is desired is the construction of a breakwater which will protect the harbor from southerly and westerly gales. As the only practicable opening for the larger boats lies to the southwest, it involves very expensive work to provide the desired protection and at the same time a satisfactory entrance from the same direction. The depth at the logical location, which is at the mouth of the harbor, ranges up to 90 feet at mean low tide. To place the breakwater farther up in the harbor where both length and depth would be less would so restrict the area of the harbor as to be of doubtful value.

It has been suggested that a general harbor of refuge could be established by the construction of a breakwater. I do not believe that any such a use would develop at this place. The coast of the mainland is within such a short distance and possesses so many superior shelters that it is my opinion that vessels would run for the coast rather than seek shelter at Monhegan Island, where the space is limited and the chances of securing satisfactory refuge somewhat questionable. For larger vessels the entrance would be difficult.

7. The only wharf in the harbor is at the northeastern end. It is owned by the public and is free to all users. It affords all the accommodation at present needed or likely to be needed for some time to come. Should additional facilities become necessary there is abundant space available. The transactions are simple and nothing more than already afforded is needed in the way of terminal accommodations. There are no questions of water power, land reclamation, or other matters which can be introduced into this proposition so as to lessen the cost to the Government.

8. The community at Monhegan is small, but enterprising and deserving. Protection is undoubtedly needed, but, unfortunately, the physical conditions are such that this can not be provided in a satisfactory degree and at the same time at a reasonable and justifiable cost. To retain a satisfactory approach or entrance to the harbor, to afford adequate protection, and to avoid limiting the anchorage space, involve a work which would cost a sum out of proportion to the interests involved. To build a breakwater within the harbor, where the cost would be less, would so restrict the anchorage or harbor

area as to fail in securing an advantage commensurate with even the reduced cost and would be a serious disadvantage should a more comprehensive plan for improvement be undertaken or become necessary in the future.

9. For the above reasons it is my opinion that Monhegan Harbor is not, at this time, worthy of improvement by the General Government.

F. A. POPE,
Major, Corps of Engineers.

[First indorsement.]

THE DIVISION ENGINEER, NORTHEAST DIVISION,
New York City, October 25, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY.

Forwarded, concurring in the views and opinion of the district engineer officer.

FREDERIC V. ABBOT,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers.

[For report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, see p. 2.]

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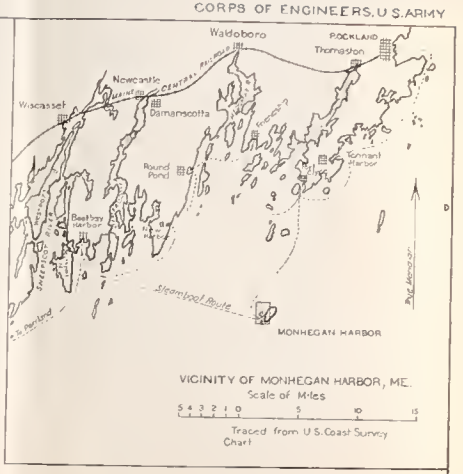

MONHEGAN HARBOR, ME.

SKETCH MAP

To accompany report on preliminary examination.

Prepared under direction of

MAJOR F.A. POPE, CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U.S. ARMY,

by E.M. Hunt, Asst. Engineer

and F.N. Scott, Draftsman.

SCALE, 1 TO 6000

100 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200 1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800 1900 FT

NOTE.

Depths are expressed in feet and referred to mean low water.

Shore line, curves of depth and scattered soundings from U.S.C. & G.S. Chart. Lines of soundings and wharf, from preliminary examination of August 26, 1915. Locations approximate.

Mean range of tide, 9.1 feet.

U.S. Engineer Office
Portland, Me., Oct. 12, 1915
Approved:

W.E. Pope
Major, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army
To accompany report of this date to the Chief of Engineers, War Department.